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PRAISE OF JOAN OF ARC

BY FATHER PIE, FUTURE BISHOP AND CARDINAL OF POITIERS.

DELIVERED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ORLÉANS, **MAY** 8 , **1844**

ANNIVERSARY DAY OF THE DELIVERANCE OF THIS CITY.

What a beautiful chaste generation with brightness!
For the memory of him is immortal with God and with men...
Crowned for ever, she triumphs, winning the prize of undefiled contests.
How beautiful is the chaste generation! What a halo round his forehead!
His memory is immortal before God and before men.
She triumphs, crowned with an eternal diadem;
unblemished amid the fighting, she won the prize of victory.
BOOK OF WISDOM, IV, 1-2

GENTLEMEN,

God, who holds the plagues at His orders, and who makes lightning His minister, most often leaves to the unleashed passions the care of executing His will and accomplishing His eternal designs. Such is, if I am not mistaken, the ordinary part of Providence in the history of the centuries: man moves, agitates himself in the free sphere of his thoughts, of his often culpable desires; and God, skilful in extracting good from evil, converts obstacles into means, and from crime itself forges a powerful weapon. **Then the result is of God, and it is always admirable ; but the action is of man, and almost always worthy of blame.** And that is what makes the study of history so deeply distressing: not a page that is not bloody; the most hideous passions are perpetually in play there; glory hardly obtains this name except by indulgence; and the hand, tired, would reject this soiled book a thousand times, if the divine action did not appear above these conflicts and these agitations, **governing things by a will all the more firm and wiser than the instrument is more rebellious and more blind.**

However, it is not always so. God does not always borrow His means from the ambition or malice of men; sometimes He creates them Himself. When His sacred fingers are weary of touching only impure weapons, He Himself arises, descends into the arena, and takes up His own cause. And as then **He confesses His instrument, always His instrument is holy; and since it is His own power that He wants to bring out, ordinarily His instrument is weak.** Then appears in history one of those rare heroes, whom one would say descended from heaven, in whom glory finds no weaknesses to efface; and the gaze, saddened at having encountered everywhere, in the field of human annals, only vice under the mask of honor, only crime on the shield of fortune, rests deliciously, for example, on the forehead chaste and pure of an intrepid woman, of a warrior virgin, in whom bravery is heightened by innocence, and whose features, more angelic than human, reveal a divine virtue and a mysterious inspiration. And the heart exclaims with transport: How beautiful is the chaste heroine! What a halo of glory around his head! His memory is immortal before God and before men; spotless in the midst of battles, she won the prize of victory: *Quam pulchra,* etc.

These words of the Holy Spirit, Gentlemen, you have already applied them to your brave and modest liberator. Supernatural being in whom beauty has its source in innocence, glory in virtue: *Quam pulchra casta generatio cum claritate!* Immortal heroine whom heaven and earth have crowned with an eternal diadem, and whose memory, always blessed, is still today, after four hundred years, the object of a triumph: in perpetuum coronata triumphat . Warrior of a new kind, and who, too, without fear as without reproach, in the camps, on the battlefield and on the scaffold, won, without ever defiling it, the triple palm of virginity, victory and martyrdom: *incoinquinatorum certaminum proemium vincens.*

Gentlemen, the subject before me is immense; I will have to restrict a subject that too much abundance could impoverish. The noble exploits of Joan of Arc belong to you: this illustrious life is like the proper heritage of your city; each of you knows it down to the smallest detail. Suffer then that, from the height of this pulpit, I am less a historian than a priest, and that in front of the altars I proclaim **these great principles which will always be understood in France: that IT IS JUSTICE THAT ELEVATES NATIONS, and that C IS THE SIN WHICH MAKES THEM DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS** (Prov., XIV, 34); **that he is a providence on the peoples, and that in particular he is A PROVIDENCE FOR FRANCE: providence which has never failed him, and which is never closer to manifesting itself with brilliance than WHEN EVERYTHING SEEMS LOST AND DESPERATE ; that the richest heritage of our nation, the**

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the first of our glories and the first of our social necessities is our holy Catholic religion, and that a Frenchman cannot abdicate his faith without repudiating the whole past, without sacrificing the whole future of his country. Such are, I hope, gentlemen, some of the **convictions** that I will awaken in your souls, and which will emerge from the depths of my subject. But still more practical truths will be shown to us: we will see that **the most delicate virtue is far from being irreconcilable with the most intrepid bravery; that in the hands of God weakness becomes stronger than all human powers ;** finally, and what is still more Christian, we will see that **everything that serves the purposes of God bears the imprint of the cross,** and that **the stamp of celestial inspiration is inseparable from the seal of pain.** Let us hasten to enter into matter. Joan of Arc, raised up by God to bring about the salvation of France, beginning this reparative work with her exploits, consuming it with her misfortunes. In other words, **Joan of Arc, arm of God who overthrows the enemies of France ; Joan of Arc, victim who disarms the arm of God,** such is the subject and the sharing of this speech.

FIRST PART.

It must be said, gentlemen, **history,** when it is written by men, hardly justifies its name and too often comes close to fable . Apart from the fact that passions and prejudices almost always hold the pen, man can only say what he knows. However, he lacks two essential elements, without which historical certainty escapes him in most of his appreciations concerning men or things: he knows neither the secret springs which make hearts move, nor the even more secret counsels of God in the government of the peoples. The great day of divine revelations, says Ecclesiastes, will be that of the realities of history: *Et tempus omnis rei tunc erit* (Eccles., III, 17). Until then, all is uncertainty, prevention, system: *Omnia in futurum servantur incerta* (Eccles., IX, 2); unless, however, God explains Himself: that is what He has done in the **holy books** and by **inspired men.** There, we see uncovered the human cause and the divine reason of these great events which upset or save empires. Let us learn at this school, gentlemen; let us take the Holy Spirit as our guide; and, in the history of Israel let us learn to know ours. Joan's marvelous life will seem to you like a biblical episode, a chapter borrowed from the *Book of Kings* or *Judges.* The Holy Spirit seems to have dictated, four thousand years ago, the annals of France.

It is written in the *Book of Judges* that “God allowed to exist in the midst of His beloved people rival and enemy peoples. This is the fact; the reason, learn it: “In order thus to instruct and to try Israel, and to hold in the midst of them his chastisement ready at the instant when he should forsake the Lord his God: ut in ipsis experiretur Israelem, utrum *custodiret precepta Domini* (Judith, II and III) ” ". “The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and they forgot their God; and the Lord, in anger, **delivered** them into the hands of their enemies, to whom they remained subject eight years. And having **cried out** to the Lord, He raised up a **savior** for them who delivered them (ibid.). And again the children of Israel committed evil in the eyes of the Lord, who abandoned them into the hands of the Philistines, for forty years... (Ib. XIII). I stop; the whole history of this people is only a series of similar alternatives. Smitten the day he became **a prevaricator,** the term of his punishment is already fixed by the Lord. And when the oppressors flatter themselves with annihilating their victim forever, the Most High, who desires **the amendment** of His people and **not their ruin,** breaks the proud rod which He had used; the avenging God becomes a father again; and Israel, supported by His arm, pursues its divine destiny through the centuries.

The application is easy, gentlemen; but if it is glorious for us, God forbid that I want to make it offensive for a great people, our neighbor, and today our ally! Had I not learned, with Bossuet, that the inhabitants of this island, the most famous in the world, derive their origin from Gaul, and that some remains of the blood of our fathers still flow in their veins (Bossuet, Oraison funèbre *d 'Henriette of England),* could the French priest forget the eager hospitality offered him, in the days of his misfortunes, by this land from which sound beliefs had been able to flee, but where generous feelings did not weren't extinguished? Now, the Holy Spirit said: “You shall not hate the Idumean, because he is of the same blood; nor the Egyptian, because you were strangers in his land” (Deut., XXIII, 7).

However, Gentlemen, if **OUR FRANCE IS A PREDESTINED NATION, ANOTHER PEOPLE OF GOD UNDER THE NEW LAW, THE KINGDOM OF JESUS CHRIST,** as our heroine will say, England, in the divine plan, was for us, for several centuries, this necessary rival, this providential enemy, permanent instrument of the justices of God. One foot on his island and the other on our continent, his envious gaze spied on our faults, and his skilful, I do not mean shrewd, policy never failed to take advantage of them. And when our own iniquities, putting themselves in harmony with his ambitious views, called upon us just severities, ardent auxiliary and interested minister of divine vengeance, England immediately threw herself on her prey; his legions enslaved our richest cities and our finest provinces;

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its kings assumed the proud title of monarchs of France. Then when the crown was going to be established on their head; when the most beautiful kingdom after that of Paradise was going to pass entirely and forever under a foreign yoke – an odious and heavy yoke, after four centuries it is permissible to say it: there was so far from the easy and paternal government of our kings to the rigid and speculative administration of the islanders, so far from the banner of lilies to that of leopards! – then the God of France, remembering His people and **THE MISSION HE GAVE THEM FOR THE GLORY OF HIS NAME AND THE TRIUMPH OF HIS CHURCH,** came to his aid and suddenly dispelled his proud oppressors, as the storm scatters the light straw.

More than once already divine intervention had been manifest in favor of France. Formerly, under the walls of Chartres, the arm of the Virgin Mary, even more than the elements, had disarmed the conqueror of Crécy and Poitiers ; and when the terrible Edward was dead, there was hardly a corner of land left for him to set foot on French soil. *Rursumque filii Israel fecerunt malum in conspectu Domini, qui tradidit eos in manus Philistinorum quadraginta annis.* (Judic., XIII) And again France forgot the Lord her God, who had miraculously protected her. To punish France, God caused her king to fall into madness, and forbade victory to second the ardor of his heroes. Agincourt, Crevant, Verneuil, forever deplorable days, and which justify **Jeanne** 's words : "May **God, to punish the sins of men, allow the loss of battles** "! A queen, whose heart did not know how to become French, forgets that she is a mother; Troyes sees the torches of a culpable marriage, the sacrilegious sanction of an infamous treaty; and soon, over the coffin of Charles VI, the voice of the herald resounded with these unusual words, which will disturb, in the silence of their tombs, the ashes of old kings: Long live Henry of Lancaster, King of France and England !

It was all over for the monarchy, if God did not come to its aid. Orleans, the last rampart and the last resource of Charles VII; Orléans, the faithful city par excellence, and which could then say: *Etiamsi omnes, ego non ;* Orleans, in spite of the intrepidity of its warriors and the heroism of its citizens, was about to fall into the power of the English, whose triumphant and devastating march would henceforth be stopped. Lord, have you forgotten your ancient mercies? And you, why aren't you there, good Constable, whom we call the Sword of France? - Silence ! **here shines the SWORD OF GOD!...**

“Daughter of God, go! go ! go ! I will be at your aid! go ! And the daughter of God got up. A naïve child, celestial voices spoke to her *of the great pity that belongs to the kingdom of France.* Fearful and shy shepherdess of *Dom-Rémy,* the patron saint of her hamlet, the French Samuel (BOSSUET, *Sermon on the unity of the Church),* awaits her at the foot of the altar in Reims, where she must take him the heir of Clovis. Despite a thousand obstacles, she overcame distances; she is at the knees of her king. "Gentle Dauphin," she said to the monarch, "my name is Jehanne la Pucelle, and send you the King of Heavens, through me, that you will be crowned and crowned in the city of Rheims, and will be LIEUTENANT OF THE KING OF THE SKIES WHO **IS KING OF FRANCE** ". Never had the court seen so much **gentleness** and **courage,** so much **simplicity** and **nobility,** so much **ardor** and **modesty,** so much **ease** and **piety.** For a long time human prudence hesitates, politics deliberates, theology discusses, science examines. Jeanne suffers these delays with difficulty, because time is pressing; and yet she resigns herself to these **necessary trials,** which must guarantee her divine mission against any suspicion of a rash and adventurous enterprise.

Finally its generous momentum is no longer stopped. She leaves, and Orleans, already comforted and as if relieved, says the naive chronicler, by the celestial virtue which shines in this mortal angel, greets and carries in triumph that which comes in the name of the Lord. Here, Gentlemen, I will be careful not to follow Jeanne on your ramparts, your fortresses, your bridges and your redoubts, nor to repeat these high deeds known to the youngest children of the city. What the most experienced and intrepid warriors, the La Hires, the d'Illiers, the Dunois, the Xaintrailles, had not been able to accomplish in seven months, seven days, what am I saying? three days of combat were enough for Jeanne to accomplish it. “Everything is new in this war: *Nova bella elegit Dominus ;* it is the Lord Himself who has overthrown the forces of the enemy: *et portas hostium ipse subvertit.* The valiant men had lost courage, and their hands remained helpless, until a woman, until a virgin arose in Israel: *Cessaverunt forts et quieverunt, donnec surgeret Debbora, surgeret mater in Israel.* My heart loves the princes of Israel. In the place where the chariots were smashed, where the enemy army was crushed, let there be told the justices of the Lord and His mercy upon Israel. The remnants of the people have been saved;

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[1] “Edouard's intention was that he would enter this good country of Beauce, and treat himself beautifully on this good river of the Loire. Suddenly, in front of Chartres, who greatly humiliated and broke his courage. For: one there came the great of the king of and a collapse and a storm so great and so horrible descended from England that it seemed quite properly that the century should end; for there fell from the air stones so large that they killed men and horses; and were the most daring amazed. And so looked at the King of England towards the Church of Our Lady of Chartres, and surrendered and vowed devoutly to Our Lady, and promised, if as he says and confesses since, that he would grant himself peace. .

FROISSARD . ed. de Buchon, pp. 51 et seq.

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the Lord fought with the brave. From heaven, angels and saints took part in the battle; they fought against our enemies: *De coelo dimicatum est contra eos; steloe adversus Sisaram pugnaverunt.*
The torrent of Cison swept away their corpses. Their horses broke the horns of their feet in the impetuosity of flight; the bravest of their warriors turned their backs and rushed at each other. Rise, rise, Jeanne, and sing a canticle of praise to the Lord: *Surge, surge, Debbora, et loquere canticum !* »

The vaults of this beautiful temple still resounded with hymns of thanksgiving; Orléans had barely had time to contemplate and bless her deliverer, and she was already facing new perils. An inspired heroine, she prophesies victory, and victory does not know how to give the lie to her. “In the name of God,” she cried, “we must fight them; should they be hung in the clouds, we will have them”. Jargeau is no longer with the English; the fields of Patay are strewn with corpses. A terrible colossus crushed my country yesterday; he raised his dominating forehead above the cedars of Lebanon, I only passed by, and now he is no more. The English army has disappeared; its most renowned chiefs, Salisbury, Glacidas, Suffolck, Talbot are either dead or captive; the others fled. Holy Spirit, once again lend me an inspired lyre to celebrate Joan's triumphs: “It is the Lord who grinds armies into powder; the Lord is his name: *Dominus conterens bella, Dominus nomen est illi.* He has placed His camp among His people to deliver us from our enemies. Assur came from the side of the weather, with an extraordinary multitude and force; his legions filled the torrents, and his cavalry covered the valleys. He had sworn to burn my lands, put my young people to the sword, take my virgins captive. But the Almighty Lord smote him, and delivered him into the hands of a woman who immolated him: *et tradidit eum in manus feminae.*

For the mighty enemy was not overthrown by the hand of young men, nor of old warriors: it was not the Titans of Israel, nor the Giants of the nation that annihilated him; but it is Judith, daughter of Merari, with the graces of her face”.

But while I sing, other marvels have succeeded. Jeanne no longer fights; it flies from triumph to triumph. Place, place for the dolphin led by the angel of victory! Reims, open your doors to the successor of Clovis, to the grandson of Saint Louis; pontiff of the Lord, go up to the altar, let the holy oil flow and place the crown on the forehead of the **LIEUTENANT OF JESUS CHRIST.** And you, my young heroine, enjoy this spectacle which is your work. Ah! how I love to see you standing near your king, beside the altar, your holy standard in your hand! Later, when they want to make you a crime of this privilege, you will answer nobly: *He had been to the penalty; it was right that he was honored.*

Gentlemen, what wonders! what a dazzling revolution! And who did all these things? An eighteen year old girl. I am wrong. Following a noble feat of arms, one of our kings wrote to his mother: “Madame, please ask everywhere to have **GOD** thanked ; because, without fault, *He* ***HAS SHOWN THIS BLOW THAT HE IS GOOD FRANÇOIS*** ”. Gentlemen, when was God more French than in the days of Charles VII? The veil that hides the divine action here is transparent. Under this maiden's armor, it is the God of battles who fights; Her virtue is in her; and what instrument more worthy of Him? Let us stop for a few moments to contemplate the ineffable physiognomy of this earthly angel.

Never, perhaps, has the divine dogma of the salvation of men by a virgin been so perfectly reproduced in the sphere of human affairs. Joan of Arc is, in the new law, one of the sweetest and most faithful copies of Mary, as Judith, Esther, Ruth, Debora were her figurative sketches in the old alliance. All the traits of these holy women apply to our inspired youth. A harmonious composition of the most contrary perfections, of attributes which seem to exclude each other, Joan does not belong to that order of vulgar heroes whose brilliant qualities do not make them better, and her virtues are not of those of which hell is full. . **Jeanne is the Christian heroine par excellence.** What men admire in her is what God crowns. See her from the cradle.

In the solitude of this smiling valley watered by the Meuse, on the enamelled grass of the meadows, in the shade of willows and beeches, while his hands carried the crook or turned the spindles, under the wings of a mother chaste and pious who, by mixing caresses with the lesson, had taught him for all science to invoke this Father of men who is in heaven, to greet with the angel the Virgin full of grace, the beginnings of Jeanne the shepherdess were happy . From her earliest years she was immaculate in her way; the exquisite sensibility of this tender heart never poured out except on innocent or sacred objects, like those fountains which never stray their limpid waves beyond their beds. If her fingers braided the flowers of the fields into garlands, it was to crown the cherished image of Our Lady of the Hermitage. She prayed tenderly under the shade of the old oak tree; but the religious accent of the bells, of which she too, as the most famous warrior of our century, did not want to lose a single vibration

(BONAPARTE, *Mémoires de Bourrienne,* t. IV, ch. 13, p. 122), if he came to strike her pious ear, his delight was to run to the village church to pray there again, to cry there, and to hide in the shade of the altars. Never

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youth was no longer pure and more fervent: the innocence of the pastoral life, peace, the silence of the valleys, the sweetness of the maternal roof, the fragrant air of the house of God, the perfumes of the countryside, the holy joys of its morning, you hardly seemed to announce the tears of the painful evening of his life! (Ps., XXIX, 6) Divine goodness loves to spare youth; it does not ordinarily throw on the brow of the dawn, on its graceful tints, the black clouds of the storm (II Kings, XXIII, 4). Foreseeing such a stormy evening, God took pity on Jeanne, his sweet little creature, and spread peace over her childhood, over the first hours of the day of her life, by a touching compensation which the heart almost always encounters like a providential law which console him.

But the brilliant midday of Jeanne revealed in this soul so pure riches to which nothing can be compared.

Brave as the sword, she is **modest** as the angels. **Is there a stain, even a dust on this chaste one sent from heaven? God is, in this respect, so delicate in the choice of His instruments!**
Her virtue is the only point where I find her susceptible. She braves under the ramparts the attack of the arrows; but a word of outrage thrown at her modesty causes her tears to flow, and her brothers in heaven must come to console her. O holy tears of **modesty,** sacred tears of **modesty,** how I venerate you!
It is still **strength ;** it is the noble energy of the most magnanimous as well as the most delicate love. Not that Jeanne was trembling and pusillanimous; never was virtue more natural and less fierce. Vincent de Paul said these words, which come from a great man, and which define the whole rule of his virginal institute: "My daughters, I place your chastity in the care of your charity". “On seeing Joan,” said a young and loyal knight, “no one thought of forfeiting; and this because of the great goodness that was in her. ". Happy child, whose **gentleness impressed respect,** whose **kindness commanded virtue !**

Ardent like a lion, she is **tender** and **sensitive** like a lamb. What could be more **intrepid** than Jeanne? Her hand grasped, applied the ladder to the walls, under a hail of arrows almost all directed against her. How gracefully she guided her foaming horse! What science infuses military strategy! How often did she awaken the dormant ardor of her comrades in arms! She was **the soul** of this great struggle. Without it, everything languished; everything revived, triumphed through her. The arms of this whole army were moved by a woman's voice: *Dux femina facti.* But his **strength** was **without violence.** Sparks fly under the swift feet of her steed, because she learns that the blood of France is spilled.

"Never," she said, "have I seen the blood of Françoys, but my hair did not stand on end." She wept while dressing the very wounds of her enemies; she wept above all over their eternal loss.
“Glacidas, Glacidas, go to the King of Heaven; you insulted me, but I have great pity on your soul! And when Glacidas and his family have rolled in the river, the amazon bursts into tears, because she thinks that their guilty souls appear before God. In the plain of Patay, see the warrior transformed into a charity girl, supporting in her arms and resting on her bosom the head of a poor wounded man, an Englishman, whom she encourages to die, while he stammers his failing lips his last confessions and his repentance.

Shy and **naive** like a poor little shepherdess who knows neither A nor B, **ignorant** in everything else, when heaven has spoken to her, she has all the **sublimity** of **genius,** all **the authority** of **inspiration.** The warlords, assembled in council, hide themselves from Jeanne by the consciousness of their inferiority; and the young girl, knocking with her spear on the door of the hall, almost made the Gaucourts and the Xaintrailles turn pale. “You have been on your advice, and I on mine. In the name of God, the advice of Our Lord is surer and more skilful than yours”. His ways of speaking are **noble, courteous, princely ;** the chivalrous familiarity comes appropriately to place itself on her virginal lips; and the proudest warriors, even the princes of the royal blood, submit to the inevitable **ascendancy** of this human and superhuman speech at the same time. "Forward, gentle duke, attack!" Ah, sweet duke, are you afraid? don't you know that I promised the Duchess to bring you back safe and sound? It is to the Duc d'Alençon that she speaks thus. Dunois himself hears his command; he bows and humbly promises to obey. Jeanne's idiom has not aged. What did I say ? like those tints of antiquity which are one more merit in certain marvels of art, it effaces the modern phrase, day by day, duller and poorer, whatever our pride may say of it. His replies were **lively, just, animated ;** they were unexpected **flashes ;** and if it is permissible to speak thus, his **replies** suffered no reply. "If God is for us," a doctor said to him, "what good are men-at-arms?" ”

– In the name of God, she replies, the men-at-arms will fight, and God will give the victory... My fathers, my fathers, there is more in the books of Messire than in yours. Monsignor has a book which no cleric reads, however perfect he may be in the clergy”.

Finally, thrown into the midst of the camps and into the arena of war, she is **pious** and **meditative** like a daughter of Carmel. For her, the cell and the oratory are close to the battlefield. All his loves are for Jesus. She no more forgets Him in the burning powder of warlike struggles than at the foot of the altars, whether the sacrifice is offered in the silence of the holy place, or in the countryside still damp with drops of

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the night. And there, how **little** she becomes again in the presence of her God! What forgetfulness of herself in the intoxication of triumphs! Following the example of the Saviour, whom she loves so dearly, she does not seek his glory, but the glory of Him who sent her, the glory of **her King who is in heaven, and of her King also who is on Earth.** So much **holiness,** joined to so much **bravery,** exerts a happy seduction on hearts. Dunois is a Christian; La Hire, who no longer blasphemes, prays in his own way; the camp is a temple; and a thousand warriors cry out: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord, the God of hosts!" »

O God! whose ways are beautiful, and paths peaceful (Prov., III, 17), You who walk a virginal way (SAINT AUGUSTIN, t. VI, L. *De sancta Virginitate,* 29), be blessed to have come to our help by hands so pure and so worthy of You! Be blessed for having made **Jeanne so beautiful, so holy, so immaculate !**
I search in vain for what could be lacking in my heroine; all the various gifts pile up on his head; not a gem to add to his crown. By mind and by heart, I know **NOTHING MORE CHRISTIAN AND MORE FRENCH THAN JOAN OF ARC, nothing more mystical and more naive ;** in her nature and grace have embraced as sisters; divine inspiration has left all its share to the national genius, all its free development to the French character; **she is a chivalrous ecstatic, a warlike contemplative ;** it is of heaven and earth; it is, pardon this anticipation, it is a weeping **martyrdom ;** she is a **saint** who has no altars; that one venerates, that one almost invokes, and that one is permitted to pity; whom the priest praises in the temple, whom the citizens exalt in the streets of the city; **model** to offer in the most diverse conditions, to the daughter of shepherds and the daughter of kings (she too proved that she knew how to understand the holy and noble figure of Joan), to the woman of the century and to the virgin of the cloister, to priests and warriors, to the happy in the world and to those who suffer, to the great and the small; the most complete and widest type from the double point of view of religion and country, a **historical** figure who has no equal anywhere; Joan of Arc is a sweet and chaste **apparition** from the sky amid the tumultuous agitations of the earth, a laughing island of greenery in the arid desert of human history, a **perfume** of Eden in our sad exile. ; and, to speak the language of Saint Augustine, it is **God coming to us, this time again, by a virgin path.**

For, Gentlemen, **Joan of Arc is of God; she is the messenger of God ;** she kept saying it. And what Frenchman would feel the sad courage to deny the testimony of Jeanne's words, so magnificently confirmed by the testimony of her life and her death? And that, for not wanting to recognize this so consoling truth, to know: that **GOD LOVES FRANCE,** and that if necessary He saves it by His miracles. "Prince of Burgundy, wrote Jeanne to the enemy of her king, I assure you, by the King of Heaven, for your good and your honor, that you will not win the battle against the loyal Frenchmen, and that all those who wage war against the said holy kingdom of France, wage war against King Jhésus, king of heaven and of everyone; please battle hard, go to the Sarrazin". You hear it, Gentlemen, **THE HOLY KINGDOM OF FRANCE, THE KINGDOM OF THE LOYAL FRENCH, IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD HIMSELF; THE ENEMIES OF FRANCE ARE THE ENEMIES OF JESUS.** Yes, God loves France, because God loves His Church, relates everything to His Church, to this Church which crosses the centuries, saving souls and recruiting the legions of eternity; God, I say, loves France, because he loves His Church, and **France, in all times, has done much for the Church of God. And we, Gentlemen, if we love our country, if we love France, and certainly we all love it, love our God, love our faith, love the Church our mother, the nurse of our fathers and ours. The French, we will tell you from sunset to dawn, his name is CHRÉTIEN, his nickname CATHOLIC. It is for this reason that France is great among nations; it is at this price that God protects her, and keeps her happy and free.** And if you want to know in a single word the whole philosophy of its history, here it is: *Et non fuit qui insultaret populo isti, nisi quando recessit a cultu Dornini Dei sui :* "And no one was found who insulted this people, except when he has departed from the Lord his God" (Judith, V, 17).

But Jeanne's restorative mission is not over; she began her work in **glory ;** she will pursue her in **pain.** The wife of Jesus must drink from the chalice of her husband. Jeanne is going to pass from Tabor to Calvary; and his death will be more fruitful than his life. Come together, gentlemen. Ancient wisdom had glimpsed what a noble spectacle it is to see a just man grappling with adversity.
But Christian doctrine alone can make us understand this **mystery of expiation, which draws all its virtue from the cross.**

SECOND PART.

It has been said and often repeated that Joan of Arc's mission expired at the foot of the altar in Reims, that her duty was to leave the army and return to the cottage, lay down the sword and pick up the spindle; and because she entered from that moment on the career of misfortunes, she is accused of having departed from the way which the Lord had traced for her. This all-too-human assessment, gentlemen, is not based on

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the story. After a scrupulous and thorough examination, I can clearly see that it was Jeanne's desire to resume the sweet life of the hamlet; but I do not see that it was his duty . Her voices are silent, but her king speaks; and for her in whom **the religion of the second Majesty had so much power,** I do not know that, in default of the ministry of the angels, heaven could explain itself more authentically than by the mouth of the Lord's Anointed. Ah! let us not be among those who do not rest until they have found wrongs in adversity, and who always impute faults to misfortune. The theology of the friends of Job is not that of the disciples of the cross.

Christianity rests entirely on the dogma of atonement, of redemption through pain.
The Savior of men did little and suffered much; the Gospel is concise on His life, verbose on His passion. His great work was to die; it is by His death that He quickened the world. Now, so beautiful is the first and most fundamental truth of the Christian symbol, it is also **the first moral law of Christianity that the disciples, and above all the apostles of the Crucified, continue the mystery of His sorrows.** And if, among the children of men, heaven chooses **privileged beings** whom it raises to the glory of being **the extraordinary instruments of its power and its love,** it is only at the cost of a thousand anguish that He bestows such favors. Of divine grace, even more than of human glory, we can say *that it sells dearly what we believe it gives.* The life of inspired men is a drama whose outcome is almost always tragic. Learn from the great apostle what was the final fate of all the prophets: *Lapidati sunt, secti sunt, tentati sunt, in occisione gladii mortui sunt :* "They were stoned, sawed, tried in a thousand ways, beheaded" (Heb., XI , 39). And if the religion of the cross already reached by such terrible preludes the ancient prophets, what to say of this living and natural representation of His agony, His crucifixion and His death, which Jesus Christ engraves in lines so deep in the heart? and on the flesh of His apostles and His prophets of the new law, **who must accomplish in themselves what is lacking in the passion of Jesus.** Gentlemen, a Christian who suffers, it is Jesus who suffers again in the members of His body, and who **thus completes His work of redemption** (Coloss., I, 24). Also, in the divine balance, for the salvation of a people, **a martyr weighs more than a hero :** *Melior est patiens viro forti, et qui dominatur animo suo expugnatore urbium* (Prov., XVI, 32). **THE BAPTISM OF BLOOD IS INSEPARABLE FROM THE DIVINE MISSION.**

He understood this poor father, this good Jacques d'Arc, when, having glimpsed in a dream the marvelous future of his daughter, he said: "If I knew that the thing happened that I have thought of her , I would drown her instantly". Right from the start, in fact, I see signs that are too significant. Joan alone sees them only in half-light: the precious attention of providence, which **proportions light to strength,** and which fears to oppress the timid virgin if she shows her at once, as formerly to Paul, this soul of iron, all that his mission must bring him pain! (Acts, IX, 15). Like the young and naive Isaac, she walks for a long time without knowing the fatal secret that concerns her. But, for anyone other than the victim, how evident from the outset that she is walking towards the mountain of sacrifice! The two saints given to Joan as advisers and assistants are two virgin martyrs (Saints Catherine and Marguerite). For any final reward, what they promise her is to lead her to Paradise.

Immediately the school of pain begins. The pious child is **despised** as a visionary, **rejected** as an intriguer, **exorcised** as a demonic; she has already shed many tears when she obtains to be conducted to her king. There, new ordeals still more painful, **insulting suspicions, humiliating disdain,** a trip to Poitiers where she had to suffer so much, more frightened than she was by the arguments of an army of doctors than by the artillery of an army of Englishmen. . Then, at the very height of the action, and when she is about to be precipitated into glory, see how heaven makes her feel that it is not she who acts, but the divine arm which acts through her; see how pain always precedes and buys triumph, so that it says like Paul: "My strength is not from me, but from God: for, when I am weak, it is then that I am strong: *Cum infirmior, tunc potens sum* " (II Cor., XII, 10). It was the great and solemn day of the seventh of May, the day which was to immortalize the young heroine and decide the deliverance of Orleans. A great victory awaits her, she knows it; but she has also known for a long time that her blood must flow. Jesus fights through it; now the instrument must accommodate itself, be appropriated to the hand that uses it, and the hand of Jesus was pierced.

In the middle of the battle, a bolt strikes her in the breast and knocks her down. Frightened for a moment, she cries; her saints, who had warned her, console her; she pulls out the arrow that pierced her with her own hand, and begins to pray. And as Dunois, in despair, sounded the retreat: "In God's name," she exclaimed, rushing towards the Bastille, "everything is yours, and enter it." Just now she was lying in her blood, and now she is radiant with glory. His wound was the signal of his triumph; it is strength in infirmity, power through

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[1] This truth has been firmly established, and the contrary prejudice victoriously refuted by the *cantor* and *historian* of Joan of Arc, M. Le Brun de Charmettes. Allow me here to express my gratitude for his benevolent friendship.

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weakness: *Cum infirmior, tunc potens sum.* Another day, it was in front of Jargeau, she was the first to attack; a huge stone rolls over her head and knocks her into the ditch. A cry of triumph resounded on the rampart; terror froze the French. Suddenly getting up prouder and more terrible: “Friends, sus! on! our Sire has condemned the English; they are all ours”. The French revived, the place was taken, and Suffolck had only time to summon a knight to gloriously surrender his arms. This is **still Christian dogma; the mysterious PREPARATION of success by reverse, of VICTORY BY DEFEAT :** *Cum infirmior, tunc potens sum.*

But if the imprint of the cross is thus marked even on Joan's victorious sword, what will it be now that this sword is shattered without it ever being possible to reforge it? If the glorious phase of her life is no stranger to pain, what will it be now that she is entering the period of her **anguish,** now that action ceases and **passion** begins? "I will only last a year, and not much longer than that," she often said to the king; you must try to employ me well this year”. Alas! that beautiful month of May, which had seen her victorious and surrounded by homage in Orleans, reappeared only to see her captive at Compiègne. O Joan! I loved you happy and triumphant, I love you no less, and I **venerate** you more in your misfortunes! You have been judged worthy, not only to be God's instrument, but also to be **offered to Him in holocaust** (Acts, V, 41). God does not lack arms by which to shed blood; but **pure victims whose shed blood is an acceptable sacrifice in his eyes, that is what God seeks.** It only takes qualities as such to be a hero; it takes **spotless virtues to be a martyr.** Such is henceforth the painful role of Jeanne. Since leaving Reims, the representative of heaven has once again become a humble daughter of the earth. Her bravery remains, her inspiration has left her. It is a great soul, Gentlemen, when one has governed, to know how to obey, and not to have forgotten submission in command. Our heroine, since God no longer advises her, submits to the advice of men; what others decide, she executes, without any indication of her votes, neither for nor against. And here again I admire the **delicacy** and **holiness of providence,** which itself directed the warrior, which lets the victim walk. When Joan flew to victory, God led her by the arm; when she walks towards the stake, God veils himself for a time and withdraws his help. Thus divine wisdom is always justified in His ways. Henceforth the angels and the holy martyrs speak to Joan of her soul, of her misfortunes; they no longer speak to him of his exploits. It is not only the miraculous sword that broke in his hand; her standard, her holy standard, which she loved forty times more than her sword, rolled beside her in the dust. Paris hears his voice and despises it with impunity; for the first time victory does not obey him. Wounded under the walls of the great city, she would like to die there, and death is unruly like victory. O fatal day! awful ordeal! The envy of his rivals triumphs and grows exasperated; his friends hesitate and no longer dare to come out in his favour. Such are the men; **as soon as success fails, their faith wavers.** Thus the apostles, witnesses of so many authentic wonders, abandon and deny their Master "when the hour of the wicked and the power of darkness comes".

(Luke, XXII, 53). Their convictions, so firmly established, perish with their hopes. *Sperabamus :* “We hoped” (Luke, XXIV, 17), they say; they resign themselves to believing that they have been disappointed. Thus Jeanne sees in an instant all the past of her glory effaced from the eyes of men; the supernatural character of his most marvelous expeditions becomes equivocal: *Sperabamus :* "We hoped."

But this is only the prelude to the pain. No sooner had a last ray of utilitarian glory shone on her brow than another light soon shone for her. His saints announced to him his **captivity**
next. At this news, already foreseen, she asks with tears to die rather than endure a long prison. For all answer, it is said to him: "that it takes all in liking, and that God will help him". My heart aches, gentlemen. The virgin who had delivered your city, who had restored courage to the warriors and the crown to its king, fell into profane hands. Jeanne, abandoned by her family, and perhaps betrayed, like her divine Master, is **sold** to the enemy, sold, she, not what a slave is sold, but a crowned head. A **prison** opens, a dreadful prison, where tortures **and** perfidy **await** him.

that cannot be repeated; prison whose walls have eyes for lust, ears for treachery.
A **tribunal** is erected by **hatred ;** another Caiaphas asks for the privilege of sitting there. He is a bishop, a Frenchman, I know; let us not blush, gentlemen; he has long since denied his fatherland and sold himself abroad; they call him English, Burgundian, they no longer call him French. The interrogations begin.
There, what a contrast! On **the** one hand, **hypocrisy ,** meanness of sentiment and language, **servility,** cruelty ; on the other, **frankness, elevation ,** nobility ; **independence,** gentleness . However, how much Jeanne suffers, she so pious, so delicate, so respectful! No doubt her saints come to **console** her : “I would have died, she says, without the revelation that comforts me every day”. But to these voices from heaven which reassure her, we oppose the voice of the Church: **as if a few venal souls were the Church.**
The Church! she will speak one day, and it will be known what she thought in this great affair. The accused invokes the pope, the council: “The pope is too far away, they say to him, it is your pontiff that you must obey”. She is,

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like Jesus, **interrogated, judged, condemned with all the apparatus of legal forms and the imposing ceremonial of orthodoxy.** But Jesus was a God; she's just a weak woman. And if the Man-God shuddered, if the Man. God sweated a sweat of blood, if He needed an angel to come to support Him in His agony, if He asked that the chalice of pain pass away from Him, how can we be surprised at Jeanne's confusion, of his fears, his tears, his fleeting hesitations? Ah! far from being scandalized to find in my heroine that horror of suffering and death which does not come from prejudice but from nature (Saint Augustine, t. V, Sermon *CLXXII ,* 1), I am interested in her sweet sensibility, which brings her closer to my weakness, and which gives more value to her sacrifice and her resignation. "If your voices had commanded you to come out and signified that you would be taken," said the judge to him, "would you have gone there?" – "If I had known the time and had to be taken, I would not have gone there willingly, however I would have done their command at the end, something that should have come to me." Do you find here the language of the Master: “My Father, if it is possible, let this chalice depart from Me! However, that My will is not done, but Yours? »

(Matt, XXVI, 39).

Jesus Christ is not of the Stoic school; He feels the **pain keenly,** and He confesses that it is an **evil ;** He does not go before her, He **accepts her.** Jeanne flatters herself until the end; God leaves him that last resource of the unfortunate, which is hope. By the martyrdom predicted for her, she means her present pains. But soon the illusions fly away; a pyre is lit, and the victim advances in tears.
Forgive me if I insist on the minute conformity of the circumstances of his death with that of the Savior of men: the resemblance of the disciple is no insult to the master. She softened on Rouen, like Jesus on Jerusalem; she predicts and laments the loss of her judge, like Jesus that of Judas; like Him, she forgives her executioners. For a moment longer the weakened nature succumbs; but have we not heard Christ cry out with the accent of inexpressible anguish: *Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani ?*
(Matt., XXVII, 46). She holds in her hands, she covers with her kisses a cross, a poor wooden cross.
Once again, she bears witness to the truth of her mission, to the innocence of her king. In the midst of the flames, his last cares are attentions of **charity** and **modesty.** His eyes still fixed on the sacred sign, we hear him invoking with tears the blessed angels, and the saints of Paradise. She bows her head, lets out a loud cry: *Jesus! Jesus!* And from the bosom of the pyre, his soul, like a white dove, flies up to the heavens...

Oh what! you tremble, you weep, enemies of France! Brave people, you burned a twenty-year-old virgin; Aren't you proud of this chivalrous feat! Yes, tremble and weep, enemies of France. You have conquered: but your victory, like that of Satan over Jesus, is a **defeat**
(I Cor., II, 8). You thought you were only executioners, and you were **priests.** Among these tempests and storms, **blood was needed to appease the sky and purify the earth. France is redeemed, since God has accepted from her a virgin for host :** *Sanguine placastis ventos, et virgine cæsa; sanguine quœrendi reditus.* (VIRGIL, *Æneid.)* From now on it is possible to hope for happy returns of fortune. He is right, this secretary of the king of the English who exclaims: "We are lost, because we have put a saint to death!" “The ashes of Jeanne cry **vengeance** against you, forgiveness for France; his death will be more fatal to you than his life (Judic., XVI, 30). In the same torture, I see three triumphs: the triumph of France, the triumph of Faith, the triumph of Joan.

Triumph of France. The keys of the towns were brought to Duguesclin's coffin, and the name of Condé won battles. Joan will have no sepulchre; his noble heart, the only part that the fire could not destroy, was thrown into the waves. But his shadow, but his terrible image will pursue the English until they are driven back to their island. “I know very well,” she said, “that the English will kill me, because they think they can take over France after my death; but were they a hundred thousand more (Jeanne called the English by a happy and military nickname: Jeanne was French, and even in irons she had French gaiety), were they a hundred thousand more, they would not have the kingdom… Before it is seven years old, the English will give up a greater pledge than they did before Orleans”. Six years had not elapsed, and Paris, "that great pledge," surrendered almost without firing a shot to the intrepid Dunois. Soon Charles the Victorious reigned over the whole country of his ancestors; and a century later, the white banner of France, floating over Calais, revealed in its folds **the fulfillment of Joan's prophetic word :** The English will be driven out of France. A woman, a voluptuous queen had lost the kingdom; a heroic shepherdess, a martyr virgin saved him.

Triumph of Faith. Gentlemen, in this invasion of England, our nationality was not alone in danger. God, who relates all His counsels to the preservation of His holy Church, saw another danger.
France possesses a treasure even more precious than its independence, which is so dear to us all, however, it is ITS CATHOLIC FAITH, ITS INTACT AND VIRGINAL ORTHODOXY ; it was this treasure that was about to perish. Memorable circumstance, gentlemen! Before the tribunal of the Supreme Judge of Nations,

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England, in pronouncing the sentence of Joan of Arc, signed, a hundred years in advance, **its own condemnation. HERETIC, APOSTATE, SCHISMATIC, MALCRETE OF THE FAITH OF JHESU-CHRIST,** such are the grievances inscribed, from England, on Joan's head. Let us not tear up this precious inscription; let us leave it to history; it will soon be able to serve him to mark on the forehead another culprit, a great culprit. Didn't Edward already talk about making English priests who will sing mass in spite of the pope? And, with the license that reigns, do you not feel that Henry VIII is approaching? It is from this point of view, Gentlemen, that Joan's mission expands and. takes on **immense proportions.** If France became English, a century later she ceased to be Catholic; or else, if she resisted her rulers, she threw herself, like Ireland, into endless struggles and calamities. **The cause of France, in the fifteenth century, was the cause of God, the cause of truth: and it has been said that THE TRUTH NEEDS FRANCE.**

Do not be surprised then that the two most illustrious representatives of the Catholic monarchy, Saint Louis and Saint Charlemagne (I like this canonization for the great emperor by the inspired mouth of Joan), were moved in the midst of glory, on their immortal throne, and that they asked for a miracle for France. Do not be surprised if the archangel of France is sent to a virgin, and if this virgin is chosen at the foot of the altars of Remy, the apostle of the French, of Remy "who sacred and blessed, in the descent of Clovis , perpetual defenders of the Church and of the poor" (Bossuet, *Polit. sacr.,* l. VII, art. 6). Finally, do not be surprised if the mission of the liberator of France ends with a great and memorable sacrifice. The evil which threatened us required a supernatural remedy; when the religion of the divine Crucified is in question, prodigies of valor are not enough, **prodigies of pain are necessary.** It was again our enemies who proclaimed it, as they beat their breasts as they descended from that other Calvary: "She is a martyr for her right Lord." And if you ask me who her Lord is, she taught me to answer you that it is Jesus Christ.

Finally, **triumph of Jeanne.** Will I be paradoxical if I say that Jeanne's torture was **necessary for her** even temporal glory? Besides the fact that she conquered there "that je ne sais quoi of achievement that misfortune adds to virtue", without the trial of Joan of Arc, without the revision procedure which was the consequence, if the heroine , after the coronation of Reims, had returned to the cottage of Dom Rémy, that she had ended her days there in the obscure cares of rural life, Joan of Arc would be for posterity, would be an insoluble problem for us. Doubtful shadows would mingle with the rays of his glory; his memory holds an uncertain medium between legend and history. The novel would gain by being able to hazard a thousand adventurous suppositions; the holy and supernatural work of God would disappear. Joan would be more feted, more celebrated **by the worldly** and by those whom Scripture calls the **lascivious** faction : *factio lascivientium* (Amos, VI, 7); Christians, afflicted, would tremble at the end of a life that so much glory had exposed to so many seductions. Gentlemen, even from the human point of view, there was no other way out for Jeanne than **the cloister or martyrdom.** I am mistaken: one would have doubted the sincerity of the dispositions that emerged from the cloister. An admirable and providential thing! **The most extraordinary, the most supernatural event which figures in the human annals is at the same time the most authentic and the most indisputable.**
It is not only historical certainty, it is legal certainty that guarantees even the smallest circumstances of this marvelous life. Oh ! how great she will seem to the most remote ages, this daughter of Adam in whom his enemies and his judges could not discover a single weakness; whose intimate life is as pure, as resplendent as his public life; of which **one hundred and eighteen eyewitnesses,** among whom his childhood friends, his comrades in arms, his most familiar servants, **revealed**
everything they knew without being able to reveal anything other than **virtues !** Scribes of England, record these depositions; preserve for France the noble words of Jeanne, her inspired answers, her solemn predictions: it is from your enemy hands that **the most beautiful monument to the glory of the heavenly messenger has been erected.** O God! be blessed ! The judges who pronounced Joan's sentence wrote her absolution before posterity, as the executioners who delivered her to the flames placed the celestial palm in her hands, and the eternal crown on her head.

And now, gentlemen, I stop; and when I look back at the path we have traveled, oh! How I love to rest my eyes on this city of Orleans! Orléans, where Jeanne found no incredulous or envious people, but where she was received like a liberating angel; Orléans, where she won her first and sweetest titles to glory; Orléans, who has always cherished the precious memory of Joan in her heart, and who, after four hundred years, still celebrates her triumphs with so much love and gratitude! French and Catholic, with what happiness, Gentlemen, I came to pay this small tribute to your liberator, in the presence (I regret not being able to name such an eminent pontiff, in whom I would have found the indulgence of genius) in the presence of this venerable clergy, these illustrious magistrates, these brave warriors, finally all this multitude, whose motto is still that of Joan: **RELIGION AND COUNTRY.** Orleans, your name will be great until the end of the ages among all the cities! O you who write the

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splendors of France and of the Church, to the names of Clovis and Tolbiac, of Charles Martel and the plains of Poitiers, join the names of JEANNE and ORLÉANS, henceforth inseparable names; for Orleans was not only the theater of Joan's exploits, it was its auxiliary; **Jeanne saved her country and her faith,** and it was in Orleans; she held the divine sword, and Orleans, all of Orleans fought with her. Christians who heard me, women, virgins, children of the city, your fathers shared the glory of Joan, and they transmitted it to you. But Jeanne left you another **heritage no less precious: that of her faith, her piety, her gentle and amiable virtues.** Religion has no more attractive model to offer you than your liberator. Ah! may Orleans always be the worthy city of Joan! May Jeanne find herself again, may she live, may she always breathe in Orléans! May her gracious and holy figure shine in your morals, may she shine in your works. **To follow in his footsteps is to walk in the path of honour; Yes ; but it is also walking in the path of heaven.** And the rigors of which Joan was the victim here on earth proclaim quite eloquently that **there is nothing solid, nothing true, except what leads to heaven.**

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